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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TIP IN TURKEY: MFA ALLOCATES "157" HOTLINE NUMBER

1. (U) In response to G/TIP inquiries, national and international media sources published the following news article about TIP in Turkey.

2. (U) Published Thursday, March 10 by the semi-official Anatolian News Agency; <http://www.anadolujansi.com.tr/>:

TITLE: Foreign Ministry Allocates a Hotline for Victims of Human Trafficking

BEGIN TEXT: ANKARA (A.A) - 10.03.2005 - Turkish Foreign Ministry allocated a hotline "157" for the victims of human trafficking which will be operational next month.

Foreign Ministry stated on Thursday, "Turkey attaches great importance to combat against trafficking in human beings which emerged as a new concept following the rapid social and economic changes in the world in recent years."

"Within that scope a National Task Force has been established under the chairmanship of Foreign Ministry and an Action Plan prepared by the Task Force and approved by the Prime Ministry has been implemented in 2003," noted the Ministry.

"Within the framework of these efforts, a hotline '157' has been allocated for the victims of trafficking in Turkey. This hotline will be operational nationwide as of April 15th, 2005," added the Ministry.

Foreign Ministry stated, "157 tip off number/emergency hotline for the victims of trafficking will be staffed by Russian, Romanian and Turkish speaking personnel. The emergency calls from victims or third persons which would be received by the hotline operators will be conveyed to the security authorities for their immediate action." END TEXT.

3. (U) While the number "111" had previously been requested for the hotline for ease of remembering, the MFA and Turk Telecom settled on "157" for practical reasons. The new number is less prone to prank calls and misdials (from children holding down numbers). This number also parallels other law enforcement emergency "154" and "155", making it easier for Turkish residents to remember.

4. (SBU) The hotline will be operated by IOM for the first six months of "training," then turned over to a qualified NGO. According to Ozlem Kural of the MFA, they would prefer an NGO with branches in several cities, to enable greater assistance and response to victims wherever they are located. As part of a campaign launching and publicizing the hotline, passport inserts with the number will be handed out at entry points to travelers matching victim profiles.

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